



SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CENTER
LAWRENCEBURG, INDIANA**

One-Stop Profile

January 1997

Based on a Site Visit Conducted During July 1996

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WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CENTER LAWRENCEBURG, INDIANA

One-Stop Profile

DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL CONTEXT

The Workforce Development Center in Lawrenceburg is a designated One-Stop Center serving SDA 13, an eleven-county area of Southeastern Indiana. There are two other providers of workforce development services in the SDA—one is also a One-Stop Center, and the other is in the process of integrating its service delivery. Although this profile describes only the Lawrenceburg site, all three sites cooperate closely, exchanging information, coordinating common functions, and sharing supervisory staff.

Dearborn County, in which Lawrenceburg is located, has undergone major economic shifts during the past two decades. Once heavily dependent upon manufacturing, this semi-rural county now relies on retail trade to provide the majority of its residents with jobs.¹ Frequent and significant dislocations in the manufacturing sector drove the area unemployment rate over 10% in the late 1980s. It has since dropped significantly: official figures indicate that unemployment stands at about 6%. Popular perception, however, is that it is much lower.

The Lawrenceburg area has a history of coordination and cooperation among different workforce development agencies and programs that dates back more than a decade. Local collaboration efforts were encouraged and subsequently mandated by the state of Indiana, which has followed its own clear path toward consolidation of workforce development agencies at the state level. In response to state efforts to encourage local consolidation and coordination from 1985 on, as well as in response to local efforts to improve service delivery, local ES, UI, and JTPA providers moved into a common facility in Lawrenceburg in 1988. From the beginning, co-location has been

¹ Although the manufacturing sector still employs 20% of county residents, there has been a decline of nearly 30% in manufacturing employment since 1985, when closer to 28% of county residents worked in the manufacturing sector.

accompanied by active cross-training of staff and integration of services. Rather than viewing the One-Stop initiative as a new model of how to organize workforce development services, Lawrenceburg partners see it as the culmination of a gradual and steady process of integration. The state recognizes that Lawrenceburg is one of the most integrated One-Stop systems in Indiana.

Thus, at the outset of the state's One-Stop initiative, the Lawrenceburg Workforce Development Center was already well-established as a One-Stop Center with significant integration of UI, ES, and JTPA services. Concurrent with the federal and state One-Stop initiatives, the Center has located to a new facility that is intended to support the inclusion of a broader range of workforce development partners, facilitate integrated intake across all partners, and provide a more professional atmosphere for One-Stop operations. In addition to continuing to expand local partnerships to include additional workforce development agencies and organizations, local staff are currently exploring how to make their menu of services more responsive to the needs of job seekers and employers. Staff have identified new labor market information products, self-service options, and employer-oriented services as key areas for improvement. Principles guiding the One-Stop activities in this local area include a commitment to customer satisfaction through continuous improvement efforts and an emphasis on ongoing staff development and training.

There are several contextual variables influencing the continued evolution and development of the One-Stop Center in Lawrenceburg. These include: (1) rapid economic growth and accompanying economic shifts during the past several years; (2) proximity to areas of economic growth in Kentucky and Ohio; and (3) state-directed efforts to overhaul the welfare system. These factors, external to the Center itself, will impact the environment within which the Lawrenceburg facility continues to evolve. Equally important to the continued development of local policy and service-delivery mechanisms, however, are three factors internal to the Lawrenceburg site. These include: (4) a long history of coordination between partner programs currently housed in the Center; (5) the presence of high-quality leadership at the Lawrenceburg site; and (6) a high level of attention to human resource issues throughout the transition to One Stop-service delivery. These factors are described below.

- *The local region is undergoing rapid economic growth.* Urban expansion has prompted rapid and significant growth in employment opportunities. Expanding jobs associated with the nearby airport,

highway expansion, and the development of several large gambling casinos are offering low-skilled workers access to jobs at improved wages. Although the resulting labor market supports a high-volume labor exchange, it also makes it more difficult for Workforce Development Center staff to assist customers in planning for skills enhancement and long-term career development. Rather than pursuing gradual skills development and career planning, a number of individuals with limited skills are opting instead for entry-level jobs that offer an initial wage advantage even though they provide few opportunities for advancement. These labor market conditions have intensified the difficulties experienced by employers who are looking for stable long-term employees.

- *The Lawrenceburg Center serves the greater Cincinnati tri-state area* The location of the Center in a multistate area where many workers cross state lines to go to work makes it important for staff to establish partnerships with out-of-state agencies and organizations in order to more effectively serve their customers. Several SDAs serving the tri-state area have begun coordinating their services and sharing labor market information. These partnerships are new, the innovation of a Lawrenceburg Center case manager, but they appear to be facilitating improved service delivery.
- *In July 1995, in advance of national welfare reform legislation, the state of Indiana mandated two-year time limits for welfare recipients enrolled in the state's welfare-to-work program (IMPACT)* Although the Center is not currently providing JOBS services to AFDC recipients, the state is interested in using an integrated workforce development delivery system to support welfare recipients in their transition to work. Thus, the Center is likely to be substantially affected by recent state-level welfare reform initiatives. Service providers face the challenge of assisting low-income job-seekers in developing adequate work-skills and finding work that will enable them to remain self-sufficient.
- *Partnerships between staff and supervisors of various programs and agencies have been developing for over a decade* This coordination has rendered the shift to integration much easier than in other Indiana sites, where such partnerships were relatively new. Conflict between state-merit and non-merit employees, for example, has not emerged as a serious challenge, and most staff members could not recall a time when such tension was prevalent.
- *The local-level Program Director responsible for the Center's operations is balanced in her ability to provide leadership as well as encourage innovation and experimentation* Center staff regularly contribute to the development of new policies and procedures, both informally, through intra-office networking, and formally, through

regular brainstorming sessions called “roundtables.” Employees are then encouraged to experiment with new ideas. The cross-state relationships that the Lawrenceburg site has developed with other SDAs, for example, was originally the idea of a Center staff person who was encouraged to pursue it.

- *Attention to investing in and supporting a high quality staff is a strong feature of the Lawrenceburg Center* The vast majority of staff employed at the Center have been there for many years. They are committed to the concept of One-Stop, and more importantly, to high-quality customer service. All respondents emphasized the importance of ensuring that Center staff receive the resources they need to provide high quality services, including training, good communication networks, and the ability to influence workplace decisions.

ORGANIZATION & GOVERNANCE OF LOCAL ONE-STOP INITIATIVE

The state of Indiana’s plan for policy oversight of local One-Stop systems calls for increased coordination between Private Industry Councils (PICs)—which formally govern Center activities—and other local stakeholders.² Although the Indiana Association of Private Industry Council (PIC) Directors has lobbied the State for the authority to have JTPA PICs evolve into local Workforce Investment Boards, no final decision had been made regarding the designation of local governing boards at the time of the site visit.

Within the Southeastern Indiana SDA, the JTPA Private Industry Council has evolved from playing a narrow JTPA-related policy role to taking on broader oversight responsibility for the integrated workforce development services offered through local One-Stop Centers. Its incorporated administrative entity—River Valley Resources, Inc.—continues to deliver JTPA services directly. In the future, the PIC hopes to become more engaged in strategic planning and ongoing coordination between employers, job seekers, service providers, and economic development agencies, including local Chambers of Commerce.

Key agencies that participate in the Lawrenceburg Workforce Development Center and employ staff housed in the Center include:

² Such stakeholders include local elected officials, economic development entities, educational institutions and organizations, county-based providers of social services, and other community-based organizations.

- *River Valley Resources*, the administrative entity for the 11-county JTPA Service Delivery Area, which has responsibility for JTPA Title II services for economically disadvantaged individuals as well as JTPA Title III services for dislocated workers;
- *The Indiana Department of Workforce Development*(DWD), which is responsible for Wagner-Peyser (ES) services, Unemployment Insurance, Veterans Employment and Training Services (VETS), UI Profiling, Reemployment Services, JTPA, and Vocational and Technical Education Programs;
- *Green Thumb*, which is the local operator of Title V Older Worker programs;
- A representative from *Vocational Rehabilitation Services*, who is outstationed at the Center several days per week to provide services to eligible customers; and
- *Southeastern Career Center*, which supports a full-time on-site Adult Basic Education/GED instructor.

The fiscal agent for the Center as a whole, as well as for the One-Stop implementation grant funding, is River Valley Resources—the JTPA administrative entity. Formal oversight of all three workforce development centers in the SDA is the shared responsibility of the SDA Director (who is also the Executive Director of River Valley Resources) and the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Program Director for the area. Within each Center, however, a single individual has been designated as the “functional supervisor” of all participating agency staff. For the Lawrenceburg Center, the DWD Program Director has been designated as the functional supervisor of all Center staff.

Although formal supervisory responsibility for staff remains with the agency that officially employs each individual, a formal written contract between the Indiana Department of Workforce Development and River Valley Resources clarifies the distinction between formal and functional supervision and makes it possible for Center staff to work together as part of a unified workforce development entity. As a result of this integrated administrative structure, formal agency affiliation does not determine Center staff roles and responsibilities. Rather, staff are organized by function across program lines, and individual staff frequently bill their time to more than one categorical funding stream.

Another agency with which the Center closely coordinates services is the Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA), which provides income support and child

care assistance, and administers welfare-to-work services on behalf of public assistance recipients. FSSA occupies office space adjacent to the Center and shares a conference room and classroom space with Center staff. FSSA customers frequently use Center services, but the contractual agreement between the two agencies is limited to a leasing arrangement for office space and the sharing of staff who provide services to the customers of both agencies during special functions, such as job fairs.

Additional “non-core” partners with which the Center has developed referral linkages include the *U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Women Infants and Children (WIC)* nutrition program; *Ivy Tech*, the local branch of the state’s technical college system; county *Mental Health Services*; the *Small Business Development Center* in Madison, which offers entrepreneurial training courses and financial assistance to small businesses; *Southeast Indiana Economic Opportunities Corporation*, which operates *Head Start* and offers child care assistance; *Step Ahead*, which provides child care assistance and youth services; and *Transition Resources*, which provides services to migrant farmworkers. Center staff are interested in establishing or improving relationships with these organizations and others to improve customer access to needed services and minimize duplication of effort among local agencies. Thus far, however, coordination between the Center and these non-core partners has been informal in nature. Because Lawrenceburg is a fairly small town and has only a limited number of service providers, staff “just know” other providers of related social services.

Although the Center does not have any formal organizational structure for coordination with the state’s school-to-work initiative, linkages with youth-serving agencies and institutions are also seen as key to meeting the objectives of the participating partners. Current efforts to support such linkages include active outreach into local high schools and technical schools, communication with teachers to enhance career education opportunities for students in grades 8 and 9, involvement in JTPA Summer Youth Employment Program activities, and participation in a juvenile justice program to assist youth offenders seeking employment or training opportunities.

In summary, the Lawrenceburg Workforce Development Center has developed an organizational structure that permits it to integrate common functions, such as case management and job development, among participating partner agencies, as well as to coordinate closely with additional local agencies and organizations that have common or overlapping interests and client populations.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

Staff of the Lawrenceburg Center hold regular meetings as well as interagency “roundtables” to address specific issues or brainstorm about improved services and outreach strategies. More important than the existence or frequency of such meetings is the degree to which they support the open informal communication that occurs regularly in the Lawrenceburg Center. Staff indicated that meetings tended to be forums for collective decision-making, but that regular communication takes place openly and constructively on a daily basis. Staff expressed the importance of informal communication to support formal capacity-building efforts.

Technology has also supported coordination and communication among local partners, as well as between the state and the Lawrenceburg Center. Locally, the Lawrenceburg office is part of a local area network (LAN) that includes the Madison and Richmond offices. This network has evolved over the past two years and has facilitated information sharing among and between staff and supervisors in all three local sites. The Lawrenceburg office is also a node for a wide area network (WAN) that has improved the local site’s ability to communicate and coordinate services with the state through the sharing of data and case files. The Lawrenceburg office does not yet have regular electronic mail service, but staff are looking forward to installing this service in the near future.

A recent local initiative has been the development of cross-state relationships between SDAs intended to inform improved services to customers *region-wide*. Because large numbers of Lawrenceburg residents are employed out-of-state, local staff felt that such relationships would enable them to: (1) provide better services to their individual and employer customers; and (2) share information about, and experiences with, new workforce development initiatives. Such relationships with Kentucky SDAs have already proven valuable. Several representatives from nearby SDAs have recently visited the Lawrenceburg site to inform their own transformations to integrated services. The cross-state sites now share job orders and screen each other’s candidates. They are interested in further coordination through technology, but since Indiana and Kentucky operate different information systems, the local sites are, for the time being, forced to rely on paper to share information.

Partnerships with Ohio SDAs are less well-developed: the Lawrenceburg office maintains applications for enrollment in the Ohio system, but does not actually screen for jobs or receive regular job orders. Coordination between local sites in the three

states, however, seems to be increasing with the frequency of formal meetings and facility tours. Such efforts will provide job-seekers in all three states with access to better and more timely information about available jobs and training opportunities. The entire locally-driven effort to coordinate and communicate across state lines is representative of the general level of initiative and innovation that is typical of the Lawrenceburg site.

FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS, BUDGETING AND FISCAL ISSUES

Unlike many other local sites in Indiana the Lawrenceburg site is currently operating under a single integrated budget. Whereas issues involving lease arrangements and property ownership have been barriers to budget integration for most sites, Lawrenceburg was able to achieve this goal with relative ease because of two important factors.

First, the fiscal agent for the Lawrenceburg Center, River Valley Resources, administers the integrated services contract budgets for all three Centers in the SDA.³ Because River Valley Resources has a dual role—both as administrative entity for local JTPA resources and as administrative staff to the local Private Industry Council responsible for overseeing the integration of workforce development services—it has been able to oversee resources from multiple sources.

Second, the core partners relocated to the new site as partners—they worked together to select the location, move in, and organize the space with the specific intent of integrating services. This process helped staff identify resources collectively rather than by program or agency. Several respondents from different programs remarked, “At this point, we cannot really imagine doing it any other way . . . if we had to separate again, it would be nearly impossible.”

The Lawrenceburg One-Stop Center’s budget is comprised of a number of funding sources:

- *Wagner-Peyser* funds support the functions formally associated with the Employment Service.

³ The majority of Wagner-Peyser and UI resources are not included in the integrated services contracts but are overseen directly by the DWD Program Director.

- *JTPA* funds support the assessment, career planning, and job training functions for eligible individuals.
- *Federal Unemployment Insurance* funds provide benefits for eligible unemployed workers.
- The *Family and Social Services Administration* budget pays for the office space it leases from the Workforce Development Center, and shares the cost of utilities and some common functions, such as reception for JOBS customers enrolling in the training programs.
- *Veterans Employment Service (VETS)* supports the equivalent of one-half of one salaried individual so that VETS services may be provided on-site.
- *Adult education* funds support an ABE/GED instructor who maintains a full-time presence at the Center.
- *Carl Perkins vocational education* funds support assessment and other services provided at the Center for participants enrolled in vocational education programs with partner institutions, such as Ivy Tech.
- The *One-Stop grant* funds awarded to the Center supported the establishment of the Center's Information Resource Area (IRA), which was collectively planned by the Center partners.⁴

Although their funds are not part of the integrated budget, *Green Thumb*, the administrator of Title V older workers funds, and *Vocational Rehabilitation* maintain a presence on-site through non-financial agreements with River Valley Resources and the Lawrenceburg Workforce Development Center.

DESIGN OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP INITIATIVE

Evolution and General Description of Local Design

Collaboration between the various partners began over a decade ago and was supported and later mandated by the state of Indiana. As early as 1985, interdepartmental planning began at the state level, followed closely by a merging of the Indiana Office of Occupational Development (IOOD) and the Indiana Employment Security Division into a new Department of Employment and Training Services (DETS). Local-level service providers began to merge their functions at this time, reflecting the state-initiated change. The move toward integrated services gained

⁴ The Lawrenceburg site received \$20,496 out of the \$120,000 in total grant funds awarded to the Southeastern Indiana SDA. These funds have thus far supported the purchase of hardware and software, furniture, and media (publications, videos, resource guides) for staff and customer use.

momentum through these early changes. By 1990, the state was already beginning to struggle with the practical consequences of integrated services: committees were organized to develop a common intake process, self-driven systems, and other mechanisms that would support integration. The state sponsored a series of forums and summits on workforce development issues in which cross-agency staff participated. In 1991, realizing that a “paradigm shift” in the delivery of employment and training services was underway, the Governor issued an executive order combining the Department of Employment and Training (Wagner-Peyser, UI, and JTPA) with the Commission on Vocational and Technical Education, and the Office of Workforce Literacy to form the Department of Workforce Development (DWD). This structural reorganization supported statewide integration efforts. It was the intent of the state administration to review the mandate of DWD on an ongoing basis to support continuous improvement in providing workforce development services to Indiana job-seekers, workers, and employers.

In Lawrenceburg, the UI, ES, and JTPA programs have been co-located in a single facility since 1988. Vocational Rehabilitation and Veterans’ Services were also early collaborators in the integration of local workforce development services in Lawrenceburg, as was Green Thumb, the organization that administers Title V Older Workers’ funds. As described previously, co-location of ES, UI, and JTPA staff evolved quickly into coordinated staff training and plans for integration of shared functions.

In January 1995 the Lawrenceburg Workforce Development Center relocated to a new physical facility that was large enough to accommodate additional partners, as needed, and whose physical layout would support the development of shared functions, including a common intake area. At this time, the offices directly across the hall from the new Workforce Development Center were vacant, and Lawrenceburg staff hoped to recruit the welfare department as a neighbor. Six months after the Center was established at its new location, the Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) did, in fact, lease the nearby available space.

Current One-Stop system development objectives include: (1) *formalizing relationships* with a broader set of community agency partners; (2) *developing a wider menu of services* designed to meet customer needs; and (3) *conducting outreach to both large and small employers*. Because the partners at the Lawrenceburg site have such a long history of collaboration and cooperation, and because Lawrenceburg has been

moving toward integrated services incrementally for over a decade, most respondents had tremendous difficulty recalling their first steps in coming together. Moreover, since the evolutionary process had been so gradual, staff had trouble assessing the nature of services and relationships “before” and “after” One-Stop.

Although Center staff could not identify a single catalyst that prompted a rethinking of the means by which employment and training services were delivered, they did feel that the size of the staff and the “home-town” nature of the area served had a tremendous impact. First, everyone knows one another or at least knows *of* one another. This increases the accountability that local service providers feel because they often see their customers around town, in their neighborhoods, or in their children’s schools. The personal lives of the Center staff are not as distinct from their professional lives, nor are staff as anonymous as they might be in a larger metropolitan area.

Second, precisely *because* personal and professional relationships overlap, staff of various agencies had been cooperating, communicating, and coordinating informally with each other long before such coordination was thought to support improved services. Local service providers cooperated because it rendered them more efficient in their work and more responsive to their customers.

Another factor promoting coordination of services has been financial need. Decreasing budgets have been a feature of public sector service work for at least the past decade. Out of necessity, local-level partners and cooperating agencies found it more efficient and cost-effective to share information and referrals and leverage resources than to remain entirely autonomous entities. This coordination lead to the recognition that many agencies had both overlapping job functions and parallel interests.

Although the state of Indiana has received considerable attention in its efforts to promote the One-Stop approach to service delivery, the staff of both the Lawrenceburg Workforce Development Center and River Valley Resources see the evolution toward integrated services delivery as a *local* initiative, which has gained increasing support through parallel initiatives at the state and federal levels. Even though they appreciate the state One-Stop team’s support in pursuing common objectives, they are concerned about maintaining a degree of autonomy sufficient to realize a local vision developed far in advance of the state’s plan to integrate services in Workforce Development

Centers across Indiana. Shifts in policy directives governing statewide One-Stop implementation, for example, are perceived as undermining the potential for local innovation by limiting the flexibility of the local sites to establish policies that meet the needs of the local populations.

Relevance of the Local Design to the Four Federal Themes

Universal Access

In contrast to a number of local One-Stop Centers that view technology-based products, such as electronic databases on career and labor market information, as the key to providing universal access to One-Stop customers, the Lawrenceburg Center is struggling with how to revise its entire menu of services to make services meet the needs of a broader customer base. At issue are not only questions about how to provide good labor market information in a useful format, but how to make new and improved workshops and group activities accessible to a wider range of employer and job-seeker customers, without diluting the intensive services needed by individuals with greater employment barriers.

A major concern for Center staff is how to prepare to simultaneously serve two new and very different groups of job-seeker customers who are anticipated to grow in number: (1) more highly educated and experienced clientele and (2) individuals facing new time-limits on welfare benefits and are under pressure to find immediate employment. On the one hand, the Center is just beginning to develop new approaches to employer outreach and new ways to assist highly educated and experienced clientele in their job searches. On the other hand, the state's welfare customers are likely to be among those facing the most formidable employment barriers and requiring more intensive case management and job-readiness training. Staff are concerned about the Center's ability to conduct outreach and provide high-quality service to both groups of customers.

Another challenge in relation to universal access is the development of formal policies identifying the services available to various groups of customers. Currently, informal mechanisms exist through which the general public may access a limited number of services, workshops for example, designed for customers of categorical programs. Informal public access to such programs is granted on a space-available basis. However, as the Center markets its services to increasing numbers of non-

traditional customers, as well as to new employer customers, access policies must be formalized.

To make the Center's services more accessible to customers, Lawrenceburg staff have begun to discuss the possibility of providing more flexible service hours. Currently, the Center is open from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM, with the JTPA staff staying until 4:45 PM. Several individual staff members indicated that extended service hours might bring in a wider variety of customers —employed job-seekers looking for new opportunities, for example. Among the options being discussed are extended hours for all services and flex-hours for staff, or extended hours in the resource room only, with flex-hours for fewer staff.

Center staff are also concerned about how to make Center services attractive and accessible to an expanded group of local *employers*. Constraints on the Center's ability to address employer needs include the tight labor market, which severely limits the number of skilled and experienced workers who seek placement assistance from the Center. The degree to which the Lawrenceburg Center can engage in the development of new "value added" services for employers is, to some degree, contingent on the unemployment rate. The customers that the Center serves during high-growth periods typically face significant employment barriers. Providing high-quality services to employers under such conditions is more of a challenge than when there are large numbers of job-seekers. For example, the screening function of the hiring process is burdensome when an employer must screen large numbers of applicants. The Center could serve employers needs by assisting in this task. However, as the pool of job-seekers shrinks, Center staff are challenged to refer only *appropriately*-skilled job seekers to employers engaged in hiring. The rapid shift from low to high growth in the Lawrenceburg area has revealed that the ability to contract and expand service-delivery capacity is a significant challenge for the Lawrenceburg site.

Customer Choice

The Lawrenceburg Workforce Development Center has negotiated a balance between self-driven and staff-guided systems both in the intake process and in the Information Resource Area. The Lawrenceburg staff had estimated that approximately half of its customers would feel comfortable using the electronic, self-prompted, common intake system to register for services. They have been pleasantly surprised that the vast majority of their customers use the system without problems. One strategy that has undoubtedly supported the success of self-driven registration is that

the intake assistant, who maintains a presence in the intake room for the 25 busiest hours of the week, is a Title V (*Green Thumb*) participant. Currently, this staffperson can guide customers through the initial process, and she is participating in additional training that will enable her to provide more sophisticated assistance. Several staff remarked that the older age of the intake assistant tends to reduce customers' fear of the technology. "When they see her," stated one respondent, "they think that if she can do it, they can do it, too!"

The level of integration has served Lawrenceburg customers well by providing a flexible system that responds as they require assistance. Customers who require minimal guidance are permitted a great deal of latitude, particularly in the Information Resource Area, while customers requiring more assistance are able to receive it. The Lawrenceburg Center staff universally see self-driven services as a means of using staff time more efficiently. They do not see automation for as a panacea for providing high-quality services.

For customers enrolling in JTPA programs or interested in learning about local training providers, remote learning is becoming a more widely acknowledged alternative to classroom instruction. Although the local technical college, Ivy Tech, is very close to the Center, Southeastern Indiana residents are limited in their ability to access other community-based educational programs. In recent years, local officials have begun lobbying the state for a local community college. Technology, however, may help Lawrenceburg overcome the challenge of access to education and training opportunities. Many schools are just far away enough to be inconvenient for residents to attend. Remote learning options on the part of these educational institutions are expected to exponentially enhance the training options of Lawrenceburg residents. The Lawrenceburg Center is eager to facilitate this process, whether through JTPA or by providing timely and important information in the resource area.

The Lawrenceburg site has recently made Internet access available to its customers. Staff have also just begun to experiment with various browsers and search tools, and to encourage customers to search for the "home pages" of firms or industries in which they are interested. There is a concern among staff, however, that the demand for internet access will far outweigh the Center's capacity to provide it. They are, therefore, reluctant to engage in significant marketing of this service. Staff of the Workforce Development Center also envision libraries and schools providing the tools to allow students and job seekers to access the state's "web page," as well as

America's Job Bank. As these institutions go on-line, they, too, will serve as points of access to Center services.

Integrated Services

The Lawrenceburg Center has achieved integration—all functions at the Center, with the exception of UI claims investigation and adjudication, are integrated. Because the Center has a substantial history of integrating operations, “turf boundaries” between programs are largely non-existent, and new services and Center activities are developed in response to community needs, rather than in response to program-specific initiatives.

A current focus of the Lawrenceburg staff is linking the Center's job search services to other community-based employment resources. Staff understand that a more coordinated, coherent outreach strategy—attending local job fairs, for example—would result not only in better, more timely services, but would also support local marketing efforts.

While “fee-for-service” arrangements for more intensive or “value-added” services are being discussed on the state-level, they have not yet emerged as an issue in Lawrenceburg. In part because of the tight labor market, many such services (electronic screening of resumes, for example) would not be relevant at this time. However, providing a forum through which employers can directly address the labor market of the future through youth programs, has tremendous appeal to employers who are desperately seeking reliable entry-level employees.

Performance-Driven/Outcome Based

The Lawrenceburg site takes a great deal of pride in its customer satisfaction survey results. The Lawrenceburg Center has ranked first in the state in customer satisfaction for the past three years, when collection of state-wide data began. The Center, rather than documenting progress on goals specific to the state-level One-Stop initiative, is more concerned with measuring overall performance over time. Staff perceive there to be a tension between achieving high placement rates and providing superior services. For example, if high placement rates are emphasized as part of a state accountability system, Center staff fear that it would lead local sites to maximize the number of placements made at the expense of service and placement quality and/or the provision of appropriate services to hard-to-serve customers.

Because of the enormous economic shifts the local area has experienced during the past decade, staff appreciate the connection between placement and unemployment rates. During low-growth periods, when placement rates are also likely to remain low, staff feel that they can perform a valuable service through public education and outreach designed to enhance *employability* among customers over time. They are concerned that such outcomes will not be reflected in performance measures currently under development.

Physical Facilities

The Lawrenceburg WDC is housed in an office building on the grounds of an old brewery, and is fairly centrally located. The partners had some concerns about locating a Center off of the main highway that passes through Lawrenceburg—there is no public transportation in the area, so a highway location would be easier for customers without access to automobiles. Because the brewery is one of the oldest and most well-known landmarks in the area, however, customers have had little trouble locating the Center. There is ample parking and some room for expansion of current office space.

The physical layout inside the Center is ideal for shared operations. When customers open the front door of the building, a door on the left allows access to the Family and Social Services Administration, and a door on the right brings them to the Center. There is a stand-alone America's Labor Exchange (ALEX) kiosk in the shared reception area, as well as restrooms, vending machines and extra seating. FSSA and Workforce Development share a conference room and classroom space.

Because the door to the Center itself is comprised entirely of clear glass, customers see the reception desk of the Center before they actually enter the Center. The desk is staffed by one of the rotating staffpersons and a Title V older worker who assists with the intake process. Customers are asked whether they have used the Center before and are directed accordingly. If they are new to the Center, they are asked to fill out a 3x5 card so that the reception person can do an initial assessment of the customer's needs and eligibility, and refer to the appropriate staff.

The customer then enters personal information into one of three PCs set up for common intake. Also in the reception area are a large TV/VCR and instructional videos, including an introduction to work readiness skills, job-search techniques, and interviewing tips. A PC near the information desk runs a screen saver identifying the

services available at the Center. The room is neat, clean, professional, and comfortably arranged —customers have a choice of sitting in chairs near a window, or at round tables well-stocked with magazines and publications.

As customers finish the intake process, they are asked to take a number and have a seat until they are called to an information window. There are four information windows, but the number of open windows varies with customer demand. The information windows generally serve customers filing UI claims, but staff also make appointments for customers to attend various workshops, enroll in the assessment process, or meet with case managers. Customers also have open access to the Information Resource Area, which is just around the corner and is staffed by a Workforce Development employee on a full-time basis. Return customers check-in at the reception desk, where the staffperson pages the Center employee whom the customer has come to see. Customers are then usually escorted to the appropriate office, although regular customers who know where to go are permitted to seek services unescorted.

The Information Resource Area, around the corner and down the hall from reception, is a spacious, window-enclosed room with tables and chairs in the center, and various PCs and terminals on tables lining the walls. The atmosphere is pleasant, quiet and professional. The Lawrenceburg Center staff have spent the bulk of their One-Stop grant funds on furnishing and supplying the resource area, and are excited about its many potential uses.

IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL SUPPORT MECHANISMS

Staffing Arrangements

When the Lawrenceburg Center relocated to its current facility, the staff suggested that the office be organized by job-function rather than program identity. Current Center staff indicated that this arrangement has worked well for several reasons: (1) *Individual staffpersons have grown acquainted with the staff of other programs and have begun to see others as colleagues rather than employees of other agencies or departments.* This familiarity has bred a healthy camaraderie, rendered program identities increasingly invisible, and facilitated the evolution of a “seamless web of services.” (2) *Staff from different programs have been able to support each other’s efforts to cross-train because of their varying levels of expertise.* Center employees who now share the same office space benefit from each others’ specific

program knowledge. (3) *Staff have become increasingly efficient because there is less duplication of services*. In the job development function, in particular, staff share referrals and keep each other informed about their contact with employers, reducing the likelihood, for example, of more than one Center employee contacting the same employer about the same position. (4) *Staff members can better support each other in learning new technology, applications, procedures, etc. because they communicate the ways in which the new procedures will affect their jobs and programs*. Such cooperative learning strategies reduce the intimidation factor on the part of employees learning new skills or technologies.

The development of integrated staff assignments in the Lawrenceburg Center has evolved gradually over time and has been facilitated by the long tenure of most Center staff in their jobs. Job responsibilities have become more flexible as staff have been cross-trained in multiple programs and as Center operations have become more integrated across programs. Common job functions among most partner programs include: reception, assessment, case management, job development, and employer services. These comprise the functional departments/divisions in the Lawrenceburg WDC.

Although staff responsibilities are increasingly organized by functional rather than categorical program distinctions, staff are still required to keep track of what programs they are working on so that they can bill their hours to the correct program. Staff look forward to fiscal as well as the functional integration of programs sometime in the future, if and when integrated block grants replace categorical programs.

Finally, all staff pointed to the importance of rotating the front-line positions. The Lawrenceburg Center once supported a full-time receptionist, but the position was difficult to keep filled. During the interim periods, staff rotated to the front desk in order to keep it staffed at all times. This arrangement worked well, and staff realized the capacity-building benefits: working the reception desk, including answering the telephone, *requires a general knowledge of many different programs*. “Desk duty” has served as both a means of, and a reason for, continuous staff capacity-building (formal and informal) with regard to all of the programs and services available through the Center. Currently, everyone in the office—with the exception of the Program Director—works the front desk on a regular basis. In addition, staffing of the resource area is a rotating assignment.

Even in the case of partners representing programs with very specific mandates, such as the Veterans Employment and Training Services (VETS) representative, the Center has found innovative ways to include program staff in the planning and administration of workforce development services. The Veterans' representative in the Lawrenceburg Center has recently moved to half-time—the remainder of his time is devoted to case management and other office-wide responsibilities. This has allowed the Veterans' representative the opportunity to engage in cross-training, enabling him to perform any function in the office, while preserving and making more efficient the Veterans' program. If the office is assigned another VETS representative at some point in the future, similar arrangements will be made. Again, much of this flexibility lies in the approach of the Center staff to emergent challenges. When asked about the effect of One-Stop on services for Veterans, the Vet Rep responded, "My job is to serve Vets. That includes strategic planning on how to improve services to Vets . . . but if I work to improve services for *all* customers, I *am* working to improve services to Vets."

Capacity Building

Lawrenceburg Center staff were particularly appreciative of training provided by the state on new MIS procedures and systems, including an automated case management system, (described below). Overall, the state and local One-Stop partners agree that cross-training for One-Stop systems should be viewed broadly as developing staff's core competencies and identifying opportunities for skills transfer, rather than as "learning how to do someone else's job." The capacity-building framework developed by the state and supported by the Lawrenceburg Center also places a heavy emphasis on peer support and training as a means of sustaining skill development and moving toward integrated services.

Management Information Systems (MIS)

Staff at the Lawrenceburg site generally perceive MIS issues on two different levels: (1) developing mechanisms for sharing, recording or reporting information that is required at the state or federal level; and (2) managing and sharing information locally. Lawrenceburg staff feel that the state should be responsible for the development of systems that fall in the former category, whereas the local sites should have the flexibility to select the applications most suited to their needs. As a result of this dual perspective, the challenges associated with MIS issues are perhaps less daunting than in other states. The Lawrenceburg Center is not prepared to wait until

the state makes decisions about MIS issues, so its emphasis in identifying applications and systems that will fit its local needs is not on *comprehensiveness* (i.e., the ability of one system to do everything), but on *compatibility*. In general, the Lawrenceburg staff are neither overwhelmed nor “star-struck” by technology, but are pursuing a reasoned approach to using technology to enhance customer service.

The two technology-based innovations mentioned most frequently by staff as having facilitated coordination are the *common intake system* and the *Automated Case Management System (ACMS)*. The common intake procedure is a self-driven series of questions that enable customers to register for services when they first enter the Center. Although the system is self-driven, there are always two staff members in the waiting room who are ready to assist those customers who are not receptive to using technology. The system feeds information into customers’ case files and enables them to receive services from any staff person with access to the case files. It has eliminated the “traveling paper file” as the primary means of managing information, and made intra-office communication better and more efficient. The intake system is not yet *Windows*-driven, but the staff expect the transition to *Windows* to occur soon. Moreover, the current system was developed with a view toward meeting the needs of staff managing programs administered by the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and the Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA). With the addition of four questions to the current system, the same intake system could also serve as the intake system for FSSA. Lawrenceburg staff expects that such questions will be added as the current system is upgraded. This would support improved inter-agency cooperation and coordination between FSSA and DWD, as well as coordination within each agency.

The introduction of the ACMS system to Lawrenceburg —and to Indiana— was a local initiative. Several Center case managers were searching for a system, and, in 1994, saw a prototype used by an SDA in Maine. The Lawrenceburg Center worked with the state to bring in a consultant who would customize the system to meet Lawrenceburg’s needs. The consultant spent a little over one year working with the system to make it function smoothly; staff training took another six months. At the time of the site visit, staff had been working with the system for a little over one year, and expressed a high level of satisfaction with it. Moreover, eleven of the sixteen SDAs in the state of Indiana have since adopted the same system; two other SDAs have

adopted an alternative system; the remaining three SDAs have not allocated the capital required to hire technological expertise to develop and implement an ACMS package.

Although case managers at the Lawrenceburg site found the ACMS system tremendously useful, they were quite explicit about the fact that the ACMS is not a substitute for *human* case management.⁵ They believe that the purpose of automation is to improve the ability of human case managers to do their jobs.

Labor Market Information and Related Information Technology

The Lawrenceburg Center is attempting to substantially reduce its dependence on paper. Although compatibility issues prohibit electronic delivery of out-of-state-job orders, local job orders can be found on an electronic database. Staff also maintain a binder that contains paper orders, but is looking forward to making the transition away from paper complete in the coming months. Customers seem quite comfortable with the electronic resources available to them in the IRA:

- *Automated job listings* are available to Center customers via the state's ALEX database on personal computers in the Information Resource Area (IRA) as well as at an on-site kiosk in the reception area. Listings are currently limited to in-state jobs, because of data incompatibility with *America's Job Bank*.
- *Choices*, a career information and interest assessment system, is also available in the Information Resource Area.
- *Internet access* is a new offering to Center customers, through a personal computer in the IRA running *Netscape* software. Staff are currently in the process of developing rules about the use of Internet services through the Center's computer. Customers familiar with Netscape are presently able to use it at will. Center staff plan to assist most customers in using the Internet resources as a tool for career and job information.

Additional computer-assisted services available to Center customers include a *key-driven resume maker*. A personal computer is also available to customers for word processing. *Multimedia* products are used for instructional purposes. For example, an

⁵ In fact, the system is inappropriately named; it is not a case management system, but a case management *tracking* system.

instructional video available in the Center's reception area includes an introduction to work readiness skills, job-search techniques, and interviewing tips.

Both the PIC and the Center staff expressed a need for simple and more locally relevant labor market information (LMI), particularly as outreach to the schools becomes a regular part of Center activities. Staff indicated that the county-based LMI guide displayed in the IRA is out-dated by the time it goes to print, and is too heavily dependent upon projected census figures rather than actual information. It is also inadequate for border areas such as Lawrenceburg, where such large percentages of the population work outside the state. The PIC indicated that reliable LMI would also enable the regional economic development entities to better market the area to employers. Since the state is already collecting and disseminating such information, local staff generally perceive new product development in this area to be a state-level function.

Most Center staff and customers expressed support for the further development of technology-based products, although they expressed several concerns over the increased emphasis on automated products for the delivery of all services to customers. Staff expressed concerns that new labor market products would focus on the needs of highly skilled job-seekers at the expense of customers who face more serious barriers to employment; both Center staff and customers indicated that automated labor market information might not be sufficient to meet the needs of the Center's clientele. One respondent noted: "Serious job seekers already know who the employers are and other customers need more help than just access to automated information." Nevertheless, customers did feel that labor market information was important so that job seekers would understand how local jobs and industries are changing and what skills will be needed to enter different career areas.

As a result of these concerns, Center staff are working to develop a plan for combining automated and staffed services to meet the labor market information needs of Center customers. For example, seminars on the "changing nature of work" is a topic that Center staff have identified as of potential interest to a broad range of customers.

Marketing

Marketing Center services is an area that the partners acknowledge will require considerable effort. There also appears to be a need for increased communication

between the state and the SDA in the area of marketing. The Indiana Department of Workforce Development has contracted a private-sector firm to develop new marketing materials for display in various Centers, schools, Chambers of Commerce, professional associations, and community-based organizations throughout the state. These materials are quite new and in the early stages of dissemination. At the same time, the state is encouraging local marketing efforts. Although some of the local partners in Lawrenceburg have seen samples of the state's materials, they were not involved in their development, and were unaware that the state had developed such materials as a part of a state-wide marketing effort.

One major marketing challenge for the state and local sites is the establishment of name recognition among members of the general public. Staff remarked that they have altered their telephone greeting three times in as many years, and it is still difficult to introduce themselves to employer and individual customers without identifying themselves as representing the "unemployment office." (They currently answer the phone with the name "Workforce Development.") Staff are aware that the Center's image needs upgrading and are attempting to overcome this problem through new relationships with local educational organizations and increased outreach to employers. Outreach to additional community partners is also viewed as an important part of a marketing strategy. In particular, in light of Indiana's welfare reform efforts, the Center is counting on its proximity to the Family and Social Services Administration to help make potential customers aware of its services.

Effective marketing to new employer customers is also viewed as a key challenge upon which future Center success will be dependent. Although Center staff have identified the need to reach out to private sector firms that have not previously used Center services, they are unsure how to develop an effective employer marketing initiative. Employer focus groups have been identified as one possible marketing activity.

DELIVERY OF ONE-STOP SERVICES TO CUSTOMERS

Services for Individual Customers

As customers enter the Center, they are asked whether they have used the Center before. If they are new to the Center they are asked to fill out a 3x5 card so that the reception person can do an initial assessment of the customer's needs and program eligibility and can direct the customer to the appropriate place. The customer then

enters personal information into one of three personal computers set up for common intake. A personal computer near the information desk has a menu identifying the services available at the Center.

As customers finish this intake process, they are asked to take a number and have a seat until they are called to an information window. At the information windows, staff assist customers in filing UI claims, make appointments for customers to attend various workshops, enroll customers in the assessment process, or arrange a meeting with the customer's case manager. Customers also have open access to the nearby staffed resources area.

"Core" services currently available to all customers at the Lawrenceburg Workforce Development Center include:

- *Access to job listings and job matching services* through ALEX and America's Job Bank using on-site terminals as well as a nearby kiosk. The Jobs Information Center (JIC) provides local job matching services. The Lawrenceburg site also provides assisted access to the Internet, and America's Job Bank on-line.⁶
- *Application for and receipt of UI benefits.*
- *Self-service access to labor market information* through written and automated information in the resource area, and through referral to other local agencies.
- *Testing/assessment* for customers of all participating partner agencies may now refer individual customers to assessment through a battery of tests. At this time, the assessment process is not tailored to individual customer needs, but the battery is quite broad, covering customer interests, aptitudes, general basic skills, work-related basic skills, and personality traits.
- *Self-service career planning activities* within the Information Resource Area, including a CD-based program called **Choices** that describes different occupations, self-assessment software to practice and certify skills in typing and 10-key data entry, career planning videos, written career planning information for different occupations, and referral to information on starting a business.

⁶ Services in the resources area are designed to accommodate visually and hearing impaired customers as well.

- *Self-service job search training* activities within the Information Resource Area, including videos, written and automated job search materials, and use of resume preparation software. Resource area staff assist customers with resume preparation by reviewing and critiquing completed resumes.
- *Written information on local employers and training providers*, available in brochures and assorted materials within the resource area.
- *Access to on-site ABE/GED classes* offered 5 hours per day, 5 days per week by on full-time on-site instructor.
- *Referral to available community services* including training resources and family support services.

One of the design issues that Center staff are considering is whether and how to offer a wider range of services to interested members of the general public.

Services currently reserved for particular target groups eligible for funding from categorical programs include:

- *Individual service planning, counseling, and case management services* for participants in programs reserved for UI profiles, dislocated workers, older workers, and JOBS/IMPACT and JTPA participants.
- *Group job search training/job clubs* for participants in a variety of categorical programs (i.e. Veterans, Vocational Rehabilitation Services).
- *Financial assistance and supportive services* for eligible participants in various Center programs, and for JOBS/IMPACT customers.

In addition, an ABE/GED instructor teaches on-site full-time. The teacher is employed by Southeastern Career Center in Versailles, Indiana, but teaches directly out of the shared space between the Lawrenceburg Center and FSSA. Both agencies refer clients to the courses. This arrangement has been popular among Center case managers, FSSA case managers, and more importantly, customers. The classes, which run on an open-enrollment basis, have been full (over 20 students each day) since last Fall.

In addition, Center staff refer customers to other community-based agencies offering more intensive family support services.

Services for Employer Customers

Although Center staff have long conducted regular employer outreach, they believe that they would benefit from updating their outreach methods. The services currently offered to employers are fairly traditional: job matching, referral, limited screening, some testing, and the provision of space for interviewing. Center staff have established good relationships with employers over the years, but recognize the need to expand services, particularly to new employers and small businesses for whom the services might be particularly appealing.

Among recent innovations in employer services, the development of informal “account representatives” and the involvement of employers in school outreach stand out as particularly effective. Although the Center has not officially designated “account representatives,” staff do share information regularly and are aware of ongoing contact between the Center and various employers. Center employees have tried to minimize instances of different staff members contacting the same employer. Several staff persons also reported conducting informal polling among their regular employers to identify new services in which they might be interested.

School-to-work initiatives are increasingly popular among employers concerned about the future of their workforce. The Center staff felt that such interest is likely to be higher in Lawrenceburg than in more urban areas because local residents tend to maintain a high level of involvement in many school activities. Center staff have, therefore, begun to involve interested employers in school-based outreach activities.

CUSTOMER RESPONSE

Individuals

Individual respondents who participated in a focus group represented a cross-section of customers receiving a variety of services from the Center. They reported a high level of satisfaction with the services they received and felt that “personal contact and encouragement” was a strong feature of their experience. They agreed that the facilities had improved markedly over the previous several years, raising the overall level of professionalism among staff and customers alike.

It was difficult to gauge the degree to which the quality of services had changed over time because One-Stop-type reforms have been evolving for over a decade, and most customers had not received services more than once during that time. However, most participants expressed considerable surprise that such high-quality service was

available through a government agency. One participant reported telling her spouse about a workshop in which she had participated. The spouse had been a participant in a dislocated worker program several years before, and when he realized that the workshop was held at the Workforce Development Center, he was shocked, responding, “You learned all *that* at the unemployment office?” He soon also visited the Center in search of a better job.

The individual customers all pointed out the need for improved marketing of Center services. Most had been referred to services through a friend, neighbor, or former participant. Although several were dislocated workers, they had been employed in small firms which did not receive “rapid response” services—they learned about the Center through their own personal networks.

Employers

Employers who participated in a focus group were generally pleased with the services they received and responded very favorably to the idea of Center “account representatives.” Surprisingly, one of the services about which they spoke most favorably was the presence of an ABE/GED instructor on-site. Two employers reported that recent human resource policies have forced them to either seek only high school graduates, or to subject employees to basic skills tests on an annual basis. Since it is so difficult to keep employees, however, these human resource managers were resistant to placing additional (educational) barriers between themselves and their good employees. Referring employees to the ABE/GED classes for skills enhancement has allowed significant numbers of employees to retain their jobs, and employers to retain good employees.

Employers did, however, express frustration at the “trickle of applicants that comes in through Center referral.” This is one reason for increased interest in school-to-work initiatives. Employers realize that the shortage of applicants is related to the decreasing local unemployment rate and the degree to which job-seekers have flocked to the new area casinos in search of new jobs, but they are interested in Center assistance in increasing the number of applicants nevertheless. Again, in general, employers expressed a high level of satisfaction with Center services, but it was difficult to gauge the change over time, since most representatives in the focus group had had little contact with the public employment services before the One-Stop initiative began.

INFLUENCES ON LOCAL DESIGN/ASSESSMENT AND LESSONS LEARNED

The move to integrated services began as a local initiative in Lawrenceburg. Because the state was engaged in parallel integration efforts, it allowed a great deal of latitude to the Lawrenceburg staff as it began to coordinate and co-locate programs, agencies, and services. According to Lawrenceburg staff, the early catalysts for integration included: (1) the threat of *diminishing resources*; (2) *changes in the local economy*; and (3) the *need for increased communication across state lines*. The One-Stop funds directed to the Lawrenceburg facility, just over \$20,000 in total,⁷ supported the development of the resource area, but had no significant impact on the integration process. Among the factors that facilitated early stages of integration were the close personal relationships among staff of different programs and agencies and a common desire to provide better customer services, particularly because in a small city such as Lawrenceburg, customers are likely to be friends, neighbors, or relatives.

Staff at the Lawrenceburg site have experimented with various forms of organization and levels of integration, and enjoys the current arrangement, particularly the fact that the welfare agency is next door. The staffs of both agencies look forward to increasing cooperation and eventual integration, but feel that the state is lagging in its ability to support, approve or provide direction for new cross-agency initiatives.

The Lawrenceburg Workforce Development Center has developed a thoughtful and reasoned approach to improving workforce development services. There appears to be a broad-based genuine interest among staff in improved overall service delivery and an expanded menu of services. More importantly, staff recognize that the Center will continue evolving—there is a widespread understanding that continuous quality improvement is now a part of doing business. The strengths of the site as a whole include: (1) *high-quality communication, coordination, and integration* among staff representing partner agencies; (2) a *high level of energy and enthusiasm* among all staff about the Center's mission and objectives; and (3) a staff-wide *commitment to following through with local strategic plans*. Another impressive feature of the Center is its *balanced approach to the use of self-driven technologies*.

⁷ River Valley Resources was awarded One-Stop funds in the amount \$126,452. These funds were allocated across the three workforce development centers in the region (Lawrenceburg, Madison, and Richmond) to support the development or improvement of Information Resource Areas.

The Lawrenceburg site also faces many challenges. These are: (1) the *development and marketing of new services and products to employers*, (2) the *marketing of services and products to more highly-skilled job-seekers*, and (3) the *provision of services to large numbers of IMPACT clients* as a result of the State's welfare-to-work initiative. The Center appears to have developed a strong foundation upon which to address these challenges.